

## Message Text

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63

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CU-04 DRC-01 /094 W  
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P 191022Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4421

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3952

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PINT, KS, US

SUBJECT: RETURN OF GREGORY HENDERSON COLLECTION

REF: STATE 130389

1. KOREAN MEDIA HAS CONTINUED COVERAGE OF HENDERSON CASE, INCLUDING TBC INTERVIEW OF FORMER NATIONAL MUSEUM DIRECTOR KIM CHAE-WON AND CHOSUN ILBO REPORT OF HENDERSON'S PERSONAL REACTION.
2. KIM DENIED HAVING BEEN CONSULTED BY HENDERSON WITH RESPECT HIS CERAMICS, ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED HAVING INFORMALLY SEEN SOME PIECES. KIM SAID AMBASSADOR BERGER HAD ONCE SUGGESTED THAT HE ASK HENDERSON TO CEASE COLLECTING CERAMICS OF CULTURAL VALUE, BUT THAT WHEN KIM DECLINED TO DO SO, AMBASSADOR BERGER HAD SAID THAT HE WOULD SPEAK TO HENDERSON PERSONALLY. KIM ADDED THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT HENDERSON HAD BEEN "EXPELLED" FROM KOREA BECAUSE OF SOME INTERNAL EMBASSY DIFFICULTIES (WITH IMPLICATION THAT NORMAL EXPORT PROCEDURES MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BECAUSE HENDERSON'S DEPART-URE WAS NOT NORMAL).
3. CHOSUN ILBO STORY CONTAINS ESSENTIALLY SAME INFORMATION AS PARAS ONE AND TWO OF REFTEL, INCLUDING IMPLICATION OF EMBASSY RESPONSIBILITY FOR PACKING AND CLEARING HIS EFFECTS. ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONS FACT THAT HENDERSON HAS BEEN "LASHING OUT" AT ROKG.

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4. COMMENT: HENDERSON'S STATEMENT (REFTEL) THAT EMBASSY WAS

RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT SHIPMENT OF HIS EFFECTS COMPLIED WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN EFFECT IN KOREA AT THAT TIME IS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH FACTS. HENDERSON WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY, BUT HIS WIFE WAS HERE AND SUPERVISED THE PACKING, AND HENDERSON HIMSELF KNEW EXACTLY WHAT WAS BEING PACKED. WE DO NOT SEE HOW IT CAN BE CONSTRUED THAT EMBASSY HAD RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE SUCH MATTERS.

5. DR. LEE SUN-KUN, PRESIDENT OF KOREAN CULTURAL PROPERTY PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, CALLED ON DCM JUNE 19 TO DELIVER LETTERS TO AMBASSADOR AND SEC STATE REGARDING HENDERSON CASE. HE SAID ASSOCIATION HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE TWO YEARS, WAS PURELY PRIVATE AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED WITH CULTURAL PROPERTY MATTERS, AND HAD DECIDED TWO WEEKS AGO TO INITIATE DRIVE TO PREVENT ILLEGAL EXPORT OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES AND RETRIEVE ITEMS ALREADY OUT OF COUNTRY. ASSOCIATION HAD BEGUN WITH HENDERSON CASE SOLELY BECAUSE HENDERSON HIMSELF HAD PROVIDED EVIDENCE IN FORM OF PUBLISHED BOOKLET. ASSOCIATION HAD DETERMINED THAT ALL 143 ITEMS LISTED IN BOOKLET WERE CLASSIFIABLE AS CULTURAL PROPERTIES WITHIN MEANING OF 1962 LAW, THAT ALL SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO MCI CLEARANCE FOR EXPORT, AND THAT "SEVERAL TENS" OF THEM FALL INTO CATEGORY FOR WHICH EXPORT CLEARANCE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN GRANTED. HE ADDED THERE NO QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP INVOLVED, SIMPLY THAT ASSOCIATION WAS REQUESTING RETURN OF ILLEGALLY EXPORTED ITEMS TO KOREA, WHERE THEY MIGHT REMAIN IN CUSTODY OF ANYONE HENDERSON CHOSE TO DESIGNATE.

6. DR. LEE SAID THAT ASSOCIATION WAS ASKING ROK EMBASSY WASHINGTON TO CONTACT HENDERSON DIRECTLY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT US GOVERNMENT HAD NO LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO INTERVENE, SINCE THERE NO TREATY REGARDING CULTURAL PROPERTIES SUCH AS EXISTS BETWEEN ROK AND JAPAN, BUT IMPLIED THAT USG HAS MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN LIGHT 1970 UNESCO RESOLUTION. HE AGREED WITH DCM THAT SINCE HENDERSON IS NOW A PRIVATE CITIZEN, RETURN OF PROPERTIES WOULD DEPEND HEAVILY ON HENDERSON'S GOOD WILL.

7. DCM MADE CLEAR THAT IN AGREEING TO ACCEPT LETTERS TO AMBASSADOR AND SEC STATE, EMBASSY WAS ACCEPTING NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUTCOME NOR COULD HE IN ANY WAY OBLIGATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO UNDERTAKE ANY ACTION. DCM COMMENTED THAT SINCE RESOLUTION OF CASE CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPENDS UPON GOOD WILL OF INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED, FURTHER PUBLICITY OF KIND GENERATED OVER PAST FEW DAYS WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL. DCM STRESSED THAT EMBASSY WOULD MAKE NO COMMENT TO PRESS ABOUT DR. LEE'S VISIT AND DR. LEE SAID HE ALSO WOULD MAKE NO COMMENT OTHER THAN TO STATE THAT HE HAD PRESENTED LETTERS TO EMBASSY.

8. WILL TRANSMIT RESUME OF LETTERS WHEN TRANSLATED. MEETING WAS AMICABLE AND NO REFERENCE WAS MADE TO HENDERSON'S RECENT CRITI-

CISMS OF ROKG INTERNAL POLICIES.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 JUN 1974  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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